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Memorial : of Hellen
Rodgers Robertson,
wife of Dr. Wm N. Blakeman,
died May 11, 1870.

MEMORIAL

OF

HELEN RODGERS ROBERTSON,

Helen Rodgers (Robertson) Blakeman

WIFE OF DR. WM. N. BLAKEMAN.

DIED MAY 11, 1870.

"A HEART AT LEISURE FROM ITSELF."

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"MY BOAST IS NOT THAT I DEDUCE MY BIRTH
"FROM LOINS ENTHRONED, AND RULERS OF THE EARTH;
"BUT HIGHER FAR MY PROUD PRETENSIONS RISE,
"THE SON OF PARENTS PASSED INTO THE SKIES."

COWPER.

MEMORIAL

OF

HELEN RODGERS BLAKEMAN.

Helen Rodgers Robertson was born on the 20th of December, 1811, in the city of New York. Her ancestors, for many generations, had been persons of real godliness, and she often spoke to her children of their influence and of their prayers. One branch of her family was represented by Rev. James Caldwell, pastor of the First Church, Elizabeth, then Elizabethtown, New Jersey; another by Alexander Robertson, a stanch Presbyterian, a wealthy mer-

chant in New York city, and an elder in the church that called Dr. Mason from Scotland, to its pastorate. These were her grandparents.

Through her childhood and early youth her health was very delicate, but improved as she grew older. It was her desire from her earliest recollections, to be a Christian—to do God's will. At first she rendered him a service of fear rather than that of love which marked her riper years. At eleven years of age she made a public profession of her faith in Christ, uniting with the Murray-street church. This is a noticeable fact. At that day children were not expected to enlist thus openly in the service of Christ as is now the case. During her last illness she related to her daughters a little incident in this youthful. Christian life. Her mother's

state of health forbade her presence at a little gathering of praying women which met in an upper chamber in her neighborhood, and she desired her daughter, young as she was, to become a member of it. She attended it, therefore, regularly, taking her turn at presiding with the older persons who composed the meeting. When asked how she, ever modest and retiring, could do this, she replied that such were her habits of obedience to her mother, that it never occurred to her that she had any voice in the matter.

As she advanced in the divine life, she gradually was led to see that in themselves considered there was not the virtue in prayers, fastings, and self-denials that a legal spirit had lent them. She early formed habits of prayer, and through these habits learned a nearness

to Christ which enabled her to speak to Him as friend speaks with friend. It was her practice to rise very early, in order to secure an hour for communion with Him. Here lay the secret of her strength, here she grew in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, and here she gained courage with which to bear the burden of life. She learned the value of prayer through trial. When about fourteen years of age, her father failed in business, and following the good old fashion of his day, gave up *everything* to his creditors. Often, in after years, Mrs. Blakeman alluded to this time of trial. But she matured rapidly under its discipline, passing at once from childhood into early womanhood. The state of her mother's health led her to undertake the care of the household. Her little sister, eight years younger than herself, became her

special care, and they were knit together as one soul.

In 1834, Helen Robertson became the wife of Dr. W. N. Blakeman, and entered with all the energy of her nature into the new duties and responsibilities of her position. In the church which she attended with her husband, the infant class of the Sunday-school was put under her care. Its numbers soon increased to one hundred and fifty; but she succeeded in so winning their love, that she had little difficulty in maintaining proper discipline, and was able, through these little ones, to carry the "glad tidings" into many homes dark with wretchedness and sin.

But few of God's children live long without proving his word: "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." The first-born child of this household, a beau-

tiful little daughter, was suddenly snatched away when about a year and a half old, by croup. Although the father was a physician, and had made this disease a special study, a few hours only were sufficient to make this a childless home.

In the course of years seven other children were sent to fill the house with gladness; but in the mother's heart the place given to the "fairest and the first" as she loved in later years to speak of it, was never filled.

The death of her much loved sister, about two years later, leaving a little babe three months old, which Mrs. Blakeman took, to train and nurture as her own, was a trial so great, that for a time she seemed almost crushed under it.

But through the joys and sorrows of life her Christian character was ripen-

ing, and she was taught the secret of that loving sympathy with every kind of grief, which enabled her so perfectly to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep."

Her youngest son, Isaac Watts, was taken from her at ten years of age. During his last illness he talked of heaven as of another house to which he was going, to see many whom he had loved, but chiefly to see Jesus. He begged that some one would tell the little street children that they too must die, but that Jesus would take away all fear.

"Tell them," he said, "of the sinful ones of the Bible, David, Peter, etc., who were not saved because they were good, but through the blood of Jesus."

On the death of her mother, Mrs. Blakeman's father came to her, and spent with her his last years. She was

very dear to him, and made for him a happy home; while his benevolent face, ever lighted with a sunshiny smile, was as a fresh picture there. In the year 1866 he had an illness that confined him for a considerable period to the house; and soon after his recovery, in October of the same year, he fell in the street, breaking his hip, and never again left his room. A friend proposed to sympathize with Mrs. Blakeman, that she must reënter upon the task of nursing from which only just released, but was met with this characteristic reply, though it is not claimed that these are her precise words; it is rather the thought to which attention is called.

"Do not pity me; this will be good discipline for me and for my children. We have not told my dear father that he will never again leave his room, and

he is full of patience and cheerfulness. My husband is all kindness, and attends to his wants every morning, and my children love to be in his room, to read to and wait upon him. It is true that E—— and myself cannot now go out together, but we must submit to that patiently." This was said with her usual pleasant smile, and made a great impression on and taught a lesson to her hearer.

In the following April Mr. Robertson was released from his imprisonment. His last winter on earth was not a sad one; all loved to render him services which won a smile, and he continued to feel interest in all that was going on in the household or in the world at large. Often the family assembled in his room on Sunday evenings for their worship, and sang their accustomed

hymns by his side. Almost daily he heard the newspaper or a favorite book read aloud, and he had many a pleasant story to relate out of the past. When the end came, the messenger found him ready. Some one spoke of those whom he would soon see in heaven. He raised his hand, and said with emphasis: "Jesus is there." These were his last words. Mrs. Blakeman had ever made it her prayer that she might live to close his eyes; they were very dear to each other, one in heart, and alike in their sympathies and in their tastes.

In the spring of 1868, perhaps earlier, there came upon her a suspicion which one year later ripened into certainty, that God was about to lay upon her a burden from which above all others she shrank. In conversation with a friend, she expressed the thoughts and feelings

awakened by the prospect before her. As this conversation was at once recorded, the report is probably quite correct. Calling on this friend early in November, she made indefinite allusions to a not far distant death; there was some pleasant talk about heaven and its unknown joys, and on leaving, she said she should perhaps write what she could not find courage to say. At their next meeting, however, on the 15th, this had not been done, but she entered very calmly upon the subject. "I was *real naughty* at your house the other day; I ought not to have talked so," she said; "I do n't know myself. Hitherto I have always spoken freely to my friends about my joys and my trials, but now I shrink from doing it. I have not told any of my children the state of my health, except E——; it does not seem worth

while to destroy all their pleasure in my society while I am able to be about and among them, and to enter into their interests and pleasures. Do you think, that knowing my days are numbered, I should do differently?"

After listening to replies to this and other questions, she went on: "You may die before I do; others have been called suddenly away since I knew I had this disease. I *have a cancer*. All my life I have dreaded and shrunk from it. The very word is horrible. And when I learned, six months ago, that this was my lot, I felt as if I could not bear it. Nothing but God's grace sustained me. I was all alone; my children all absent, and I was glad to be alone. Often I said to myself, this must not be, it cannot be.

"I dreaded the night, and if I lay

down during the day, the thought of what was before me would make me start up and walk my room. But I want to glorify God; I want to bear cheerfully all he sends upon me. If you see me do anything wrong, promise to tell me so. Is it wrong to dress myself nicely, and be ready to meet my children as they come home at night?"

Again, "I saw a picture that impressed me greatly; generally I dislike Scriptural pictures; I love that one representing faith—but a friend had spoken to me of this one, and I felt that I did not care to see it."

Her friend interrupted her, to say she was sure she knew to what picture she referred. She smiled, and said, "Yes, it was that very one; the clinging to the Rock of Ages, when there seemed almost no rock to cling to, and the waves

and billows all raging beneath. Just so I clung to the Rock," taking firm hold of the table as she spoke—"everything else had slipped away, but I held on to that."

Again, "I suffer, at times, with prostration of strength; in such moments I am tempted to let go; but now I am trying a new tonic, and am wonderfully built up by it. I want to spend all my time in praising God; he has been so good to me, giving me this pleasant room, (the library,) where we can all have our books and our work, the sun shining in so delightfully, my children so kind and loving. I *hope* it is not wrong for me to keep up for their sakes. What do you think of my having a little entertainment for my nephew, just married; would it be quite right under the circumstances?"

She said much more which could not be recalled, but the whole interview gave the impression of a sweet, unselfish nature, and of such great faith in God, that one felt it had been good to be there.

At their next interview she proposed prayer, and knelt and prayed with her usual calmness, that she might glorify God through her sufferings, especially in the eyes of her children. She was cheerful and perfectly natural, at this as at all times save once, to which reference will be made hereafter.

She had felt and expressed a great aversion to the experiment of a surgical operation; but after a consultation of physicians had been held, consented to submit to one. It took place on the 6th of January, and though the mere prospect of it filled her soul with terror, she

controlled herself so perfectly, that of all her household, her husband and eldest daughter alone knew aught of it until it was over. She kept her place in her family with her usual cheerful face, attending to her accustomed household duties to the very day and hour. While two hearts at their breakfast table on that morning were ready to burst, she remained tranquil and serene, bravely sparing to those she could, the suspense and distress from which she would gladly have shielded all. She had not allowed one of the usual holiday festivities to be dispensed with, though physically hardly able to go through with them.

After the operation she was brought down so low that her situation became very critical. She spoke little, but lay for days in a state of most alarming exhaustion, and a depression of spirits now

appeared, which in her seemed unaccountable. Though her physical strength partially returned, her spirits did not rally. Yet even now her unselfish habits held their power over her, and she would speak playfully of her depression. Sending, for instance, one day for a friend, she said: "Tell her that I am in a gully, and want her to come and pull me out;" and on the arrival of this friend she continued to speak of herself in this strain, as if unwilling to cloud another mind with the shadow that had crept over her own. The forty-second Psalm was at this time a great comfort to her, especially a little exposition of it by Macduff, called "The Hart and the Water-brooks." She would repeat over and over again the fifth verse: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul," etc., particularly the last clause. Her faith

that she should finally triumph over this depression, never left her.

In a pencilled note to a very dear friend, written a little later, she thus refers to this time of conflict.

"I know you will be glad with me that I have got out of the dark valley where you found me in your last visit. I humbly trust I may never get in it again. In looking over Bunyan, I find he calls it the valley of the shadow of death; and after the day broke and he was permitted to emerge from it, I think he never came through it again. Thank you, dear friend, for your prayers; the Lord has dealt very mercifully with me."

On the 24th of February it was announced to her and to her family, that the disease had reappeared, and that a second operation might be necessary. It instantly became apparent that the

depression under which she had been suffering was the result of suspense. When, on the 26th, after a consultation of surgeons, it was decided that nothing further could be done, terrible though it was to her family, she received the announcement not merely with composure, but with joy, and at once began to comfort her husband and children with the promises of God. A friend arriving at that moment, she directed that she should be brought directly to the library, and went out into the hall to meet her, with a face as radiant as that of a youthful bride. From that moment she doubted and faltered no more, but seemed to possess the perfect peace of one whose mind is stayed on God. She said, "My disease is now where God put it;" and rested in His will, so that to those who were privi-

leged to enter the sunny room for which she often sang praises, it seemed like the gate of heaven.

The Psalms were a great delight to her. In reading she would often meet with a verse that met her own needs; she would commit it to memory, repeat it frequently during the day, and on going to bed at night.

"Cause me to hear thy loving-kindness," etc., Psa. 143:8, and "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation," Isa. 12:2, were two of the verses in which she took great delight; and when too weak to recall them herself, she often asked to have them repeated to her.

One day when she seemed to be suffering very much, and had been unusu-

ally silent, her daughter asked her if she could think of "*our verses*," referring to these texts. She replied, "No one in particular—all; I just say them all over and over, it is all I can do, I am so full of pain, so weak. I am only trying to live, ... I have told others too often of God's faithfulness, to doubt it now myself. He will be with me."

At another time she called her daughters to her bedside, and said: "I have a new understanding of that text, 'Except ye become as little children,' etc.; I am now but a little babe. I used to feel like a strong man. . . . . Just come to Jesus—*that* is where people stumble: come to him as a little child; walk with him as friend walks with friend; live upon him hour by hour; do whatever he gives you to do, no matter how disagreeable; 'He pleased not himself.'"

A friend calling to see her after she was confined to bed, and unable to say much, with a sweet smile she extended her hand, and said: "Nearing home, nearing home."

To another friend she spoke, substantially, as follows:

"I want you to know that we may have Christ abiding in us, really abiding in us. Put away all attempts at consistency, put away the word *duty;* if you let Him dwell in you, you will be consistent without an effort, will perform duty spontaneously. I wish I could say this to every Christian."

She never enlarged on her sufferings, but when sympathizing friends came to see her, and inquired how she found herself, she would reply: "Oh, don't talk about my sufferings; help me to praise God for his goodness; I want to

praise him myself, and to have all my friends help me to magnify his name." Though deeply solemnized in view of approaching death, she was so perfectly natural, so free from the sanctimoniousness many feel constrained to put on, that in intervals of pain she enjoyed lively talk, designed to divert her thoughts, especially, with her usual unselfishness, because she was thus furnished with material with which to entertain her sons, when they came home tired and saddened at night.

But her strength gradually gave way; she was often brought so low as to appear almost gone, and then would rally for a brief interval, again to sink. Wishing a parting interview with a friend, she one morning sent for her to come early, at an hour when she was somewhat refreshed by sleep. At this time

she was very feeble, and spoke with difficulty. "It seems almost selfish," she said, "to ask you to come here to see me suffer, but I wanted to see your face once more.

"My sufferings are very great, but we will not speak of them; I have not had one pain too many. I thought Jesus would come for me, but he has not; I hope I am not impatient for him to come. I have had no revelations, no joyful experiences, but he has kept me in perfect peace from moment to moment. I feel as if I had never been acquainted with Christ till within these past few weeks. I tell my sons to make his intimate acquaintance, his *intimate acquaintance.*"

She was asked if she looked forward with pleasure to reunion to friends in heaven. She replied, with a smile,

though her lips were white with pain, and with a gentle pleasantry of manner that her friends will recognize, "No, I haven't got as far as *that* yet; *I've only got as far as Christ;* it will be enough to see him."

She was asked if she had any parting counsel to give. "No; not a word; you can counsel me; I have said all I have to say," was the reply, made with great decision. "I want you to pray for me, that I may not be so impatient to go. When I have one of my sinking turns, I think Jesus has come for me; but he hasn't come yet. I shall see him when he does come."

To her children she said: "You ought all to rejoice when I have gone home; don't fill the house with emblems of gloom and mourning, but rejoice and sing praises with me."

Just a week before the hour of release, she spoke again of her impatience to be gone, and asked her friends to pray that God would forgive this, and give her grace to bear "cheerfully, all his will." She dictated a note to the same effect, to be read at the weekly meeting of the church; and from that time her pain gradually left her, she grew weaker and weaker, and at last passed gently into her heavenly home on Wednesday morning, May 11th, there to go on with the song of praise, so familiar to her lips on earth.

After she was gone, a little blank-book was found among her papers, entitled, "My Book of Mercies." It opens with a quotation, dated July 17, 1866, from her much-loved Psalms: "It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most

High: to show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night. For thy mercy is great above the heavens, and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds."

"That my heart may be filled with a continual sense of God's loving-kindness toward me, I felt a desire this morning, to set in order some of the daily mercies which strew my pathway.

"*First* of all comes that priceless gift of saving grace through Jesus Christ, which secures to me through faith in him, the forgiveness of my sins and redemption by his blood, adoption into the family of God, and heirship to eternal glory.

"2d. The word of God filled with precious promises, and words of comfort for all who believe.

"3d. The means of grace, with fellowship of God's children, and Christian sympathy. . . .

"4th. A loving husband and children; means to contribute to the wants of suffering ones, and ability to aid in carrying forward the great work of building that temple of which Jesus Christ himself is the chief corner-stone. . . .

"5th. These hot days which make the corn grow, giving food for man and beast, and teaching me lessons of quiet submission to the will of my heavenly Father." (She always suffered very much from heat.) . . .

"March, 1869. More than a year has passed since I have recorded a mercy received. The days and months have witnessed so many that they cannot be numbered. I can only begin and end each day by saying with the Psalmist:

'Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me bless his holy name!' . . .

"Thanksgiving-day, Nov., 1869, [the last entry.] Again would I record my testimony to the loving-kindness and unchanging love of my heavenly Father, 'whose thousand thousand precious gifts my daily thanks employ.'"

Nothing could be more characteristic than this record. She was ever singing songs in the house of her pilgrimage—not because she had more mercies than thousands who spend their lives in complaints and groans—but because she possessed a humble, grateful heart, whose holy instinct it was to be ever praising and giving thanks. The first lullaby her children heard from her lips, was the familiar hymn,

"Awake, my soul, to joyful lays," etc.,

which was so associated in their minds

with *mother*, that one of them hearing it sung by other lips, was filled with astonishment to find that hymn and tune were known in other homes.

Those who saw her in her sick-room and on her dying-bed, know how truly she "with her last expiring breath," sang God's loving-kindness, as she had done during all the vicissitudes, the sorrows, as well as the joys of life. The secret of this grateful temper may be found in her humility on the one hand, and her unselfishness on the other. She took such a low place before God, that his mercies filled her with wonder and surprise, and her heart was so "at leisure from itself," that she could look at Him and at his attributes, till the sight of Him filled her with grateful joy.

This unselfishness manifested itself to her fellow-man in every way. She al-

ways had an ear open to the cry of distress; and whether she listened to the story of real or fancied woe, had a word of good cheer for those who sought it. She began, when very young, to interest herself for the poor, and "the cause that she knew not she searched out." She never lost an opportunity to speak a word in season to fellow-travellers, to servants, to those whom she met by the wayside, to all who were in her employ. This habit brought her into contact with many sad, lonely, suffering ones, to whom she gave aid and counsel, with and for whom she prayed, and who gave her in return their grateful respect and affection.

One of her friends, who had known her well during her whole life, said of her, "Hers was the most consistent, Christ-like life I ever knew."

A few extracts from letters written at different times and under various circumstances, may be interesting as showing in some degree how true this remark was.

"1844. I sometimes feel glad the time is passing away, hoping in the future to be more useful to others, and then I remember how short at best is our life; how soon I may be called to render in my account, but not in my own strength do I expect to appear. In the righteous robe that Christ has wrought may I be found. . . . It is my sincere desire to suffer all the righteous will of God shall appoint me, without a murmuring word. He has granted me peace of mind, and is overflowing my cup with tender mercies. Oh, that I might sound his praise with every breath."

Soon after her marriage, she was invited to join a little praying circle which met once a week in the house of an intimate friend; and from that time till about two years before her death, that hour was always observed as a sacred time. When kept at home by illness—the only thing that ever did detain her—the hour was remembered. When absent during the summer months, she gathered her children, sang with them the hymns she loved, read the holy word, and taught them to pray "with and for each other."

In reference to this little summer meeting, she writes:

"Miss D—— and I have kept up our Thursday prayer-meeting. How it would rejoice my heart to know you were keeping it with me. Some of the most delightful seasons I have ever

known have been when my children were babes, and I kept that hour alone with God. I believe it has sustained and strengthened me through many summer months, when I have been deprived of Christian intercourse, and had few Christian privileges."

At another time:

"This is Thursday, and Miss D—— and I have remembered you and yours. How much I have thought of you these hot days and nights, and wished I could aid you in bearing your anxieties and watchings. I can do much here that I could not do at home. The pure, bracing air has inspired me with new vigor. I ask myself many times a day, why I am free from pain and permitted to breathe freely this fresh air, while so many are suffering and distressed. Your patient husband, I know, has been great-

ly oppressed; but when freed from this cumbrous clay, how he will

> "'Sing with rapture and surprise,
> God's loving-kindness in the skies.'

We have sung that hymn, and I wish you could have heard —— pour out her heart as only she can do, for you and the suffering one.

"May you be enabled, dear friend, to say with Isaiah, 'I will trust, and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation.'"

In a letter to one of her children, Mrs. Blakeman thus expresses her feelings on the subject of prayer:

"The privilege of prayer grows sweeter to me every day, and I want you to realize, my dear child, that it is above all other means of grace. Preaching

may be dull, Christians around us cold, but prayer keeps the armor bright."

To a young Christian:

"You have known very little of the meaning of David's words, when he speaks of the 'slippery places.' You have been 'set about with a hedge.' Did you think to walk the strait and narrow road without invitations to turn aside? Satan understands our weak points better than we do; he knows where to spread the net. Be encouraged that the Holy Spirit is helping you, and heed in time the suggestions which lead you to fear that danger is nigh. You have the elements of strength. I have not a doubt that the seeds of grace have taken deep root in your heart, and yet you are but a babe; you have yet to learn to walk. I was much struck with a remark I read not long since on

that passage, 'Ye shall *walk* in my statutes.' We do not realize the force of the word '*walk*.' How many attempts a child has to make before he can balance himself and stand erect! How many times he stumbles and falls! Just so with the Christian. . . . What we aim after is conformity to our blessed Saviour. He must be our pattern in all things; and if we can only keep hold of his arm we shall be like Mount Zion, that cannot be removed.

"May the Holy Spirit be your teacher, and help you to search yourself as with a lighted candle. Depend not upon the counsel of one who daily realizes more and more her own weakness and inability to do or say anything that is right. Where the Holy Spirit has guided me, I feel strength to persevere, and I find increasing strength when I keep the pat-

tern before me. I think you would find profit as well as pleasure in reading 'Pilgrim's Progress,' though there are some parts you will appreciate more in coming years, when you have fought a few more of the battles. I have always loved it, and often now take it up with pleasure."

To a friend:

"Do not think, my dear friend, I have forgotten you or yours. I was very sick all last week, suffering with pain in my face and head, which was very severe. I think of you all the time, and feel an assurance that you will be sustained through all your trials. Gotthold says, 'Whoever wishes to be the child of God, must take bread and sorrow together from his hand. No guest at his table need think it strange to see the rod upon it, and be obliged often to eat his

heavenly Father's bread moistened with tears. Here in this world it cannot be otherwise; but when we shall one day sit at His table in heaven, every rod shall be cast into the fire.'"

Again: "My very dear friend, I have just received your letter, which fills me with sadness. We are so far separated that my sympathy is all I can offer you, but that you have from the warmest part of my heart. I have often asked myself why it is, that in your hours of sorrow and of sickness it has not been my privilege to minister to you—*you* who have so often cheered and sustained me in my seasons of sorest trial. The description of your sick house reminds me of a like scene which I passed through when my dear sister was removed from us. Do you remember those days when God sent you like a ministering spirit to hold

up my weak hands, and confirm my feeble knees? He himself is bearing you up. Do not say, my dear friend, that you have no feeling, when in the midst of your trials you are enabled to discern so many mercies. I remember to have read the remark of some good man, I think it was Jay, who said if we are enabled to praise God in scenes of affliction, we may feel an assurance that we are receiving a blessing. It is through much tribulation that we shall enter the kingdom of heaven; and I have sometimes felt it was pleasant to know we were going through the fire. . . . How comforting to know that like as we pity our children, so our heavenly Father pities us, and will not put upon us more than we can bear."

In July, 1869, she writes to a friend who was very near her end: "I feel, at

times, almost overcome with anxiety and solicitude; but when I fear I am going to faint, I feel the strong arm that never fails bearing me up; and I love to give my testimony that 'they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.' You and I, my dear friend, shall meet again. I love to think of the great company who are waiting to welcome us in the presence of our loving Saviour. We shall be satisfied."

December 29th, one week before the operation, she wrote to a friend in her usual cheerful vein, making no reference to her own situation; but after sending new-year greetings, simply adds: "How pleasant to realize that the future is in the hands of our heavenly Father, and we know that whatever is portioned out for us, He will give us grace to meet."

It is to be regretted that of character-

istic letters written by her, so few copies have been obtained. But we will give here a sentence or two from little notes written during her illness. The first refers to the expected operation: "I am still enabled to hold on with strong confidence, to my blessed Saviour. How many Christians are praying now," referring to the week of prayer. "Is not our heavenly Father very near to his people? Oh, that I may be enabled to glorify Him! to his name be all the praise!"

Again, after the operation: "I have been brought very low, almost to the verge I sometimes felt, but Jesus was with me, and I trust my remaining days will be spent in bearing testimony to his faithfulness and love. Oh, that I may be permitted to encourage some fainting spirit, to cheer some troubled

heart. Come and see me when you can. I am yet too weak to converse much, but I find I can write with my one hand. Oh, what an experience it is to be helpless! How greatly have my heart and sympathies been enlarged! How 'God's furnace' qualifies us to work for Him!"

She little thought this tiny note, written in pencil, would meet any eye save that of the friend whom she addressed, or that any memorial of her meek and humble life would ever be made. But if any excuse is needed for putting some of her words into this permanent form, it is furnished by her own ardent desire to testify of Christ. And truly and beautifully has she done so, through a lifetime of single-hearted devotion to Him, and by a death that triumphed over the disease, from which, of all others, her sensitive nature revolted. Being

dead, may she yet speak of the loving-kindness and the faithfulness of her God and Saviour, and impress on many hearts the sense of the refuge she found in Him amid the deep waters that were fain to swallow her up.

ADDRESS

AT THE

FUNERAL OF MRS. BLAKEMAN,

BY HER PASTOR,

REV. J. O. MURRAY, D. D.

After reading passages from the word of God, Dr. Murray said:

"These triumphant words of Scripture have their fittest illustration in the memory of some sweet saint of God, who after painful and lingering illness has entered into rest. Circumstances often interpret the divine word to us. And these messages of God concerning heaven and its glories are never so clearly understood as when some Christian friend we have loved and cherished has freshly entered into the heavenly scenes. The memory of our deceased sister is one well fitted to bring them out in all their power. It is the memory of one who was eminent for the saintliness of her life on earth. Her walk with God was

close and beautiful from its beginning to its end. But it was so full of the most attractive, Christian simplicity, had about it in so marked a way the 'ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,' that any elaborate address would be utterly out of place in these funeral rites. Her Christian life began in childhood. She made profession of her faith in early youth. And when we think of the ripeness to which her Christian character attained, it seems to be a most convincing proof of the wisdom of receiving into the church those of very tender years.

"No one could have been in her society long without feeling that her Christian experience, so exquisite in its simplicity and naturalness, was of the very deepest type. This came out in many ways. Her speech about religious things, her devotional character, her views of

truth, her knowledge of the word of God, all evince the *depth* of her piety. It was high-toned in everything. There was nothing commonplace about it. As from time to time I have visited her during her last illness, I have come to learn much of Christ and his choicest truth from her lips. Once she said, 'I have longed this morning to recover, that I might know more of Christ. Oh, to know Christ, just to know Christ, seems to me the whole thing in Christian living.'

"And it was evidently knowledge of Christ which was the moving spring and the shaping power of her Christian character. This gave it depth and beauty and ripeness. This she gained in her very deep devotions, her daily fidelities, and her constant study of his word. Yet while it was so deep a character, it was

just as attractive. It had no austere and repulsive side to it. It was genuine all the way through, but it had a very marked buoyancy. Sweetness and light were both in it. In her early years she had a very terrible dread of the disease which at last cost her her life. For years she prayed that she might be spared from its pains and ravages. But, like the great apostle, she was heard only in the blessed assurance, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' The thing that she feared came upon her. But after a short and convulsive struggle of faith, the will of God was accepted cheerfully. When asked repeatedly during her last illness, for what I should pray, the answer came back invariably, 'Pray that I may be *perfectly* resigned to God's will, and to a *cheerful* acceptance of it.' On hearing that I had preached a sermon on reli-

gious despondency, from the text in Psalm 42, 'Why art thou cast down,' etc., she expressed the greatest interest in that Scripture. She dwelt with emphasis on the last clause, 'Hope thou in God, for I shall *yet* praise Him.' Through all the period of her illness—this was the key-note of her character—'Hope thou in God, for I shall *yet* praise him.' A little more than a week before her death, hearing the church-bell ring for the weekly church service, she asked that a note should be written soliciting the prayers of God's people in her behalf, adding, in a most touching way, that she knew all who had loved her would be willing to have her make such a request.

"I read the note, which was written as she had requested. The hush that followed its reading, and the tenderness

and fervor of the prayers offered, showed how deeply she had taken hold of the church, with which she had not been long a member. It was a spontaneous tribute to her lovely Christian character and of her Christian worth. And God heard the prayers. Thenceforward pain left her; she lingered about a week more, and then fell asleep in Jesus."

Since this little memoir was written, the following letter has been received from one who has, through a long series of years, had abundant opportunity to know the friend, whose character she so faithfully portrays.

"My dear friend: I regret that circumstances beyond my control have prevented an earlier compliance with the wish expressed in your kind note; and that now, I cannot command the time or thought which a review of such a friendship, extending through so many years, seems to require. My acquaintance with Mrs. Blakeman goes back to early girlhood, before she assumed the responsibilities of married life.

"When we first met she could hardly have entered her teens. Her smiling

face, graceful air, unassuming manners, delicacy of feeling, and glowing affections, unconsciously let out through her bright, expressive features, perfectly fascinated me. I could not help loving her long before I knew the richness of the gem contained in the beautiful casket. Her Christian character was remarkably symmetrical. It is difficult to say what was its peculiar or prominent feature. Yet there was strongly marked *identity;* she was in every sense herself, and not another.

"I never knew an individual so rich in the number of clearly defined, fixed principles, always ready for application to any given case. These she reached by careful examination and earnest prayer. This, added to her delicate, innate sense of propriety, made her an invaluable counsellor. The word of God

was her oracle, the Holy Spirit her teacher and guide; from their decisions there was no appeal. When she saw the truth or the right, her mind had reached a resting-place. After this she had very little to do with the views or opinions of others, and they had still less influence over her. Though naturally clinging as the ivy, in regard to truth and duty, she was remarkably independent, feeling that every one of us must give account of *himself* before God. This made her considerate of the feelings and charitable towards the opinions of those who differed from her. Hers was the charity which suffereth long, and is kind.

"A primary article of her faith was, God must reign, he ought to reign, and hence submission to HIS WILL, clearly revealed in his word, or indicated by his providence, is the duty of all his crea-

tures and the privilege of his children. How brightly this characteristic acquiescence in the Divine will shone, when the Saviour called her to lay her Isaac on the altar of her love. The heart quivered under the stroke, but cheerfully she resigned what she had joyfully received, 'thankful that the Lord had spared him to them so long.'

"Self-abnegation marked her life. Her self-will, if she had any, had been laid at the foot of the cross. Hence there was no self-seeking or self-glorification; and in others it received little lenity at her hands. Hers was a singularly pure, disinterested purpose; it was the love of Christ which constrained her, and His glory was the mark at which she aimed. She was never conspicuous, but worked behind the scenes, touching springs whose vibrations became visible.

"She was not without the mark of Sonship, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten;' but she knew her refuge and she fled to it. There, at the feet of her Saviour, she poured out her sorrows and her tears. He subdued her troubled spirit, dried her tears, and sent her out like a sunbeam, to warm, to cheer, to comfort others. Here is the secret of that self-control so supernatural, which so strikingly marked her closing years. It was not that delicate, sensitive nature, so formed for sympathy and so needing all the support it could give, that held her up when the thing she most feared came upon her. It was Christ, in her victorious. By beholding, had she not been changed into the same image?

"As a disciple of Christ, her standard was his requirements. The mark at which she aimed, perfect conformity to

it. Yet her language was not, 'that I have already attained,' but 'I press *towards* the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus.'

"She received Christ as a present Saviour, and felt that it was her privilege to walk in that liberty with which he makes his people free; to rise into that higher spiritual life, and to reach that holy confidence, in the exercise of which she could say, 'I know in whom I have believed, and that He *will keep* that which I have committed to him.' No one more loved or readily adopted the language,

> "'In my hands no price I bring,
> Simply to thy cross I cling.'

"In her home I know that she was a pattern of fidelity, order, neatness, economy, the sun of that little world, and shone most brightly in its shade. Into

that sanctuary, to hold her up as a wife and a mother, I may not enter; it is too sacred. Only those who lived in her love, and were the objects of her unceasing care and solicitude, can know or appreciate what she was in those relations.

As a friend I think I knew her, and may speak freely, confidently, affectionately. Yet I cannot transfer the portrait, or even the impressions made by those long years of sweet, heavenly intercourse, in various scenes of joy and sorrow, when heart opened to heart without reserve, and when together we carried our mutual burdens to the mercy-seat. Her friendship was disinterested, faithful, uniform. She could not flatter, but she could reprove in all loving-kindness and charity. It was confiding and confidential. She did not ask what she

could not give, but more than reciprocated all that she received. Her loving heart poured out so largely, that it was almost impossible to return 'measure for measure.' It was true I always knew where to find her, but her heart was a safe deposit, and could keep all intrusted to it.

"Such is a most imperfect sketch of the friend whose transfer to a higher sphere has left such an aching void in so many hearts. Earth has few such, with which to gladden heaven. Her removal has added another link to the golden chain which binds us to the throne.

"That in this contemplated memorial you may be able so to present her beautiful, consistent, Christian character, as to perpetuate her holy influence, is the sincere desire and earnest prayer of her friend and yours, in Christian sympathy,

"J. R. McL."

Awake, my soul, to joyful lays,
And sing the great Redeemer's praise;
He justly claims a song from me:
His loving-kindness, oh, how free!

He saw me ruined in the fall,
Yet loved me notwithstanding all;
He saved me from my lost estate:
His loving-kindness, oh, how great!

Though numerous hosts of mighty foes,
Though earth and hell my way oppose,
He safely leads my soul along:
His loving-kindness, oh, how strong!

When trouble, like a gloomy cloud,
Has gathered thick, and thundered loud,
He near my soul has always stood:
His loving-kindness, oh, how good!

Often I feel my sinful heart
Prone from my Jesus to depart;
But though I have him oft forgot,
His loving-kindness changes not.

Soon shall I pass the gloomy vale,
Soon all my mortal powers must fail;
Oh, may my last expiring breath
His loving-kindness sing in death.

Then let me mount and soar away
To the bright realms of endless day;
And sing with rapture and surprise
His loving-kindness in the skies.

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